



HR0327

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of William  
4 "Bill" Alfred Cook, formerly of Canton, who passed away on  
5 April 15, 2011; and

6           WHEREAS, Bill Cook was born January 27, 1931, to George  
7 Cook and Cleo DeLong Orndorff Cook of Mattoon; he was born  
8 during the hard-luck years of the Great Depression to a father  
9 who sold magazine subscriptions and insurance policies to  
10 farmers, but eventually took out a bank loan and bought two  
11 grain elevators to trade grain on the Chicago Board of Trade;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, Bill Cook grew up in Canton, where he went to  
14 public high school and after graduation attended Northwestern  
15 University, where he drove a cab to help pay off tuition loans;  
16 with an unbridled drive toward achievement, Bill Cook launched  
17 a company with partners to manufacture and market disposable  
18 hypodermic needles; and

19           WHEREAS, When Bill Cook severed his association with a  
20 Chicago company, Bill and his wife, Gayle, moved to  
21 Bloomington, Indiana, to create a new firm, Cook Inc.; by  
22 moving past setbacks and industry competition, his company grew

1 to become the world's largest privately owned medical device  
2 company; and

3 WHEREAS, In addition to growing their medical device  
4 company, he and his wife became revered leaders of the American  
5 historical restoration movement, personally renovating dozens  
6 of historic but dilapidated buildings, a passion that he would  
7 later bring to his hometown of Canton; and

8 WHEREAS, Besides founding a company employing more than  
9 10,000 people worldwide producing and marketing minimally  
10 invasive medical devices, he would also go on to own a  
11 world-renowned drum and bugle corps, the Star of Indiana, to  
12 own a European championship basketball team, and to produce the  
13 Tony and Emmy Award winning musical Blast; and

14 WHEREAS, Bill Cook, who became a billionaire through his  
15 company, made it his company's mission to put patients first,  
16 and that philosophy served the company well and fueled growth  
17 for nearly a half century; the company, bearing his name, was  
18 simply a means to an end for his generous philanthropic work  
19 throughout the Midwest; and

20 WHEREAS, Bill Cook helped to revive industry in his  
21 hometown of Canton; Bill spent a great deal of time in Canton,  
22 especially during the last decade of his life; in Canton, Bill

1 built a factory, bought and renovated the Fulton Square, was  
2 constructing a hotel, and purchased the former Lewis Drug  
3 Emporium, now a Sweet Shoppe with soda fountains similar to the  
4 fountains that were there when he was a kid growing up in  
5 Canton; and

6 WHEREAS, His service to his community and to the Midwest  
7 were not without recognition; he served as an honorary Speaker  
8 of the Indiana House of Representatives and was named the  
9 Indiana Chamber of Commerce Business Man of the Year in 1999;  
10 he received numerous awards for community service and historic  
11 preservation, business and productivity; and the City of Canton  
12 twice honored him for his restoration of thousands of trees  
13 after a tornado devastated the town; and

14 WHEREAS, Bill Cook's legacy as a philanthropist throughout  
15 the Midwest will serve as a permanent reminder of community  
16 stewardship and corporate responsibility; and

17 WHEREAS, William Cook is survived by his wife, Gayle Cook,  
18 and his son, Carl Cook; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
20 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
21 we mourn, along with his family and friends, the passing of  
22 William Alfred Cook; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 presented to the family of William "Bill" Cook as an expression  
3 of our sympathy and esteem for his life and career.